



File Code: 1950
Date: March 7, 2016

Dear Interested Party:

As the Forest Supervisor of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, I am the responsible official for the Chequamegon Red Pine Thinning Project. Based on the analysis outlined in the Chequamegon Red Pine Thinning Environmental Assessment (EA), I have prepared a draft Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact (DN/FONSI) for the project. The draft decision outlines the rationale and decision to implement Alternative 2, the proposed action, which will allow for approximately 44,400 acres of red pine thinning treatments in three phases broken down over a 15-year time period, and is expected to provide about 160 MMBF of timber stumpage. The project is located on the Great Divide, Medford-Park Falls, and Washburn Ranger Districts in parts of Townships 31-49 North, Range 1-4 East, and Range 1-8 West; Ashland, Bayfield, Price, Sawyer, Taylor, and Vilas Counties, Wisconsin.

This decision is subject to an objection process pursuant to 36 CFR 218, subparts A and B. Objections will only be accepted from those who submitted timely and specific written comments about this project during scoping or the 30-day public comment period in accordance with 36 CFR 218.5(a).

A written objection must be submitted within 45 calendar days after publication of the opportunity to object legal notice in the Northwoods River News. However, when the 45-day filing period would end on a Saturday, Sunday, or federal holiday, the filing time is extended to the end of the next federal working day. The date of the publication of the notice is the only means for calculating the date by which objections must be received; do not rely upon any other source for this information. The notice is planned for publication during the week of March 7th, 2016.

The notice of objection must be sent to: Kathleen Atkinson, Reviewing Officer, Attn: Objections and Litigation, USDA Forest Service, 626 E. Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee WI 53202. The notice of objection may be faxed to: 414-944-3963, Attn: Kathleen Atkinson-Reviewing Officer, USDA Forest Service, Eastern Regional Office. Objections may be submitted by email to: objections-eastern-region@fs.fed.us. Acceptable formats for electronic comments are text (.txt), MS Word 6.0 or higher (.doc), portable document format (.pdf), or rich text format (.rtf). Hand-delivered objections may be submitted at the above address between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on federal holidays.

The objection must contain the minimum content requirements specified in §218.8(d) and incorporation of documents by reference is permitted only as provided in §218.8(b). It is the objector's responsibility to ensure timely filing of a written objection with the reviewing officer pursuant to §218.9. All objections are available for public inspection during and after the objection process.



At a minimum an objection must include the following (36 CFR 218.8(d)): 1) The objector's name and address, with a telephone number, if available; 2) a signature or other verification of authorship upon request (a scanned signature for email may be filed with the objection); 3) when multiple names are listed on an objection, identification of the lead objector (verification of the identity of the lead objector shall be provided upon request); 4) the name of the proposed project, the name and title of the Responsible Official, and the name of the National Forest and Ranger Districts on which the proposed project will be implemented; and 5) a description of those aspects of the proposed project addressed by the objection, including specific issues related to the proposed project if applicable, how the objector believes the environmental analysis or draft decision specifically violates law, regulation, or policy; suggested remedies that would resolve the objection; supporting reasons for the reviewing officer to consider; and 6) a statement that demonstrates connection between prior specific written comments on the particular proposed project or activity and the content of the objection.

If no objection is received, a final decision may occur on, but not before, five business days from the close of the objection filing period. If an objection is received, a final decision will not occur before all instructions identified by the Reviewing Officer have been addressed.

Additional information about this project can be obtained by contacting Leesha Howard-McCauley, at the Medford District Office, 850 N. 8th St., Medford, WI 54451; or call 715-748-4875 ext. 37. The EA and draft DN /FONSI are available on the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest website at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=45517> or by request from Leesha Howard-McCauley.

Sincerely,



PAUL I. V. STRONG
Forest Supervisor

cc: Michelle Davalos, Robert Hennes, Sarah Holmes, Michael Martin, Jennifer Maziasz, Kristine Vollmer, Leesha Howard-McCauley, Jane Darnell